

Internet Information Quality: Quality Indicator Checklist

Sites that meet a higher number of the credibility indicators listed below are signs that the information provided is more likely to be reliable.

1. How did you find the site? Indicators of credibility:

The site was recommended or referred by another, trusted source (this source could be print, on-line, or by word of mouth).

2. What is the organization behind the site? Indicators of credibility:

The site was created by, or is part of, a known institution.

That organization provides full contact information and can be contacted by mail or telephone, or visited in person.

The organization identifies itself as educational (edu), or a governmental (gov), or nonprofit (org).

3. Who is the author? Indicators of credibility:

The author was referred by another trusted source

Others have quoted the author's work in the field.

The author's site is linked to often on the Web (can use Google to find out; a Web version of citation analysis).

4. How does the author demonstrate his/her breadth of knowledge of the topic?
Indicators of credibility:

Author cites theory and background where relevant.

Author quotes and/or paraphrases others' work and writings.

Author demonstrates knowledge of others' work in the field.

Author builds on others' work by adding new insights and by raising new questions.

5. How does the author present his/her work? Indicators of credibility:

Author describes his/her methods of research, how conclusions were reached.

Author provides or offers or links to any supporting evidence.

Author identifies any limitations of his/her research.

6. In what manner does the author present his/her material? Indicators of credibility:

- Author's writing is clear.
- Author's writing is logical.
- Author's writing is organized.
- Author's writing shows evidence of thoughtfulness and analysis.
- Author's writing shows a caring and even a passion for the topic.

7. What evidence is there of bias? Indicators of credibility:

- The organization and/or author behind the site has no overtly stated political/ideological or other predetermined overriding agenda that would automatically detract from the credibility of the data.
- If there is an overriding political/ideological agenda, any research methods utilized (e.g., any polls or surveys performed, sources used) can stand scrutiny on their own.

8. Date and Currency

- There is a published date on the Web page.
- The date is clear as to its meaning (e.g., date of original source, date Web site created, date most recently updated, etc.).
- The date is timely for the purposes of your research.

9. Completeness

- For those sites where there is an existing equivalent source in some other medium (print, CD-ROM, on-line database), the data presented on the Web are as complete as in the other media; or, if the data are not as complete, the site describes the differences in coverage.